



Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

BDE PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM

NUMBER: 35-03

SUBJECT: Detectable Warnings for Curb Ramps, and Other Locations

DATE: August 1, 2003

This memorandum supersedes the second paragraph of Section 58-1.09 (c) of the BDE Manual.

Background

Detectable warnings were required in 1991 by the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessible Guideline (ADAAG) (regulatory standards) for hazardous vehicular ways, transit platform edges and curb ramps. A suspension was placed on requiring detectable warnings at curb ramps and hazardous vehicular ways, but not for transit platform edges. The reason for the suspension was due to concerns raised about specifications, the availability of complying products, maintenance, usefulness, safety and the need for further study. The suspension expired July 26, 2001. The research determined that other designs used in place of truncated domes such as grooves, striations and exposed aggregate, were not detectable in the sidewalk and roadway environment because of the similarities to other surface textures and defects. Truncated domes have a unique design that can be detected underfoot and with a cane, and other surfaces are not considered ADA equivalent and therefore do not comply with the ADA requirements.

The Department of Justice had the option of allowing the suspension to expire on July 26, 2001 or publish a Federal Register Notice to continue the suspension. They decided to let the suspension expire. Consequently, since July 26, 2001 detectable warnings are again required. Subsequently, the Illinois Division of FHWA sent a memorandum dated November 5, 2002 informing the department of the requirements. Various systems are available for use. Many states are uncertain about best practices and as no minimum design standards for the state or local government have been established, the FHWA division office granted the department a grace period to develop specifications and standards.

Applicability

The following procedures are applicable to all curb ramps or other specified locations constructed or improved on the State highway system, and to any curb ramps under local jurisdiction and constructed or improved as part of any State highway project effective January 1, 2004.

Procedures

Responsibility for Construction of Curb Ramps

Under Section 58-1.09(b) of the BDE Manual, placement of detectable warnings alone will not be cause to remove and replace curb ramps.

Detectable Warnings

Detectable warnings shall be installed at locations as detailed in the Highway Standards. Generally, a 24-inch wide strip of detectable warning with contrasting color is required at such locations. The department has selected Federal Standard color 30166, brick red, as its standard. If a local or outside agency wishes to use a different color, BDE approval is required. Transit platforms, where railroad tracks cross a sidewalk, or where a pedestrian way enters onto a vehicular area without crossing a curb or curb ramp, also require detectable warnings. An example of the last requirement is the connection of a sidewalk to an at-grade parking lot. Ramps located at alleys or driveways do not require detectable warnings unless they are located at high traffic areas.

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